

FEBRUARY 2ND, 1914.

To The Wellington Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the Rural District of Wellington for the year 1913. From a public health point of view, the past year may be considered as satisfactory. The Death Rate is low, the Infant Mortality being especially low. There have been no epidemics of Infectious Diseases during the year in the District, and, though there are no Statistics at hand to prove the fact, I am quite sure, from my own experience and from conversations with other medical men, that the amount of general Sickness has been exceptionally small.

Before proceeding further with my Report, I would wish to express my sincere regret at the Death of my brother Medical Officer of Health of the Urban District, Dr. Meredith, who died during the last days of the year—a regret that I am sure will be shared by your Council.

BIRTHS.—112 have been Registered in the District during the year, giving an annual Birth Rate of 18·4 per 1,000. This is, unfortunately, lower than the average Birth Rate of our District. The Birth Rate, however, fluctuates from year to year in every small District, apparently without cause.

DEATHS.—There have been 67 Deaths, producing an annual Death Rate of 11·03, a low Death Rate even for an Agricultural District, and below the Death Rate recorded of Rural Districts during the past year.

The Infant Death Rate is 17·8 per 1,000 Births: only Two Children have died under one year of age during the year. This exceptionally low rate of Infant Mortality is to be attributed to the absence of epidemic disease, and to climatic conditions favourable to young children.

Five Deaths have occurred from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and one from other Tubercular Disease. During the year eight cases of Phthisis have been notified to me, and three cases of other Tubercular Disease. Tuberculous Diseases, other than Pulmonary, are, however, sometimes indefinite and depend upon a diagnosis which at times must be uncertain.

All cases of Tuberculosis receive immediate attention. They are visited by the Health Officer, who reports to me, and subsequently by myself. Shelter and Sanatoria Benefits are supplied where necessary. I only know of two cases which have been received into Sanatoriums during the year. Sanatoria Benefits, in shape of Shelters, Blankets, Milk, and Cod Liver Oil, have been supplied to several cases.


CAUSES OF DEATH.				AGES AT DEATH.			
4	were caused by	Cancer.		Under 1 year	..	..	2
5	"	"	Pneumonia.	1 and under 2 years	..	..	2
7	"	"	Bronehitis.	2 to 5 years	..	..	1
15	"	"	Organic Disease of the	5 to 15 years	..	..	2
5	"	"	Phthisis. [Heart.	15 to 25 years	..	..	5
1	"	"	Tubereulár Meningitis.	25 to 45 years	..	..	4
1	"	"	Whooping Cough.	45 to 65 years	..	..	13
The remaining 34 Deaths were from various causes, and require no special mention.				65 and upwards	..	..	43
							72

There have been very few cases of Epidemic or Zymotic Disease notified during the year.

4 cases of Searlet Fever.	8 cases of Pulmonary Consumption.
3 eases of Erysipelas.	3 of other forms of Tuberculosis.

No cases of Diphtheria or Enterie Fever.

The means of Disinfection employed by your Council are the same as hitherto:—Li.newashing—Sulphur or other Fumigation and Chemical Disinfectants. These are supplied under the direct supervision of the Sanitary Inspector or the Medical Officer of Health. Special precautions are adopted after removal of Phthisis cases. First the Room or Rooms are Fumigated, afterwards Lime-washed or Re-papered; the Floors and Wainscoting scrubbed with Disinfectant; infected Beds or Blankets undergoing Fumigation with Sulphur and exposed to the air for some days. Shelters undergo the same form of Disinfection.



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WATER SUPPLY.—The parishes of West Buckland, Bradford and Nynhehead are ill supplied with Water; many of the Wells are polluted and unfit for drinking purposes. A scheme has been started and operations were in active progress in the early part of the year. Three Springs have been opened up, and, having been concentrated at one point, have been found to yield a sufficient quantity of Water of a good quality. The Work however has been temporarily held up and proceedings arrested, it having been discovered that the Taunton Town Council, under an Old Act, had the right of supplying these three Parishes with Water, should they so desire. I believe now the Taunton Council have waived their right, and proceedings will re-commence, I trust, at an early date.

The Milverton Supply is most satisfactory and supplies 206 houses. There was no shortage during the summer months.

The Water Supply of Sampford Moor has been greatly improved by a new set of pipes, and I am informed by your Inspector that every House in the Village is now Well Supplied with Water.

HOUSES FOR THE WORKING CLASSES.—Rural District of Wellington: Area in Acres 33,906; Population, 6,074; Inhabited Houses, 1,595; Average number in a House 4.1. The House Town Planning Act came into operation as far as this District was concerned in February, 1911. During these three years 691 Houses have been Inspected and cards made out respecting them.

A Table annexed to my Report prepared at the suggestion of the County Medical Officer of Health shows that during the past year 292 houses have been examined, and out of this number 172 have been found defective. One has been pronounced as unfit for Human Habitation, leaving 119 Houses that have been passed as without defect. Of these 172 defective Houses, 90 are reported as remedied, and the remaining 83 (4 houses are not to be inhabited again) are said, in the majority of cases, to be in progress of repair.

MILK SUPPLY.—Cases of Tuberculosis amongst Cows are reported to me by the police. There is no scarcity of Milk in the District.

The number of Dairies on the Register is 28, but there are many others who supply Milk and claim exemption to registration.

In the Spring of last year, in company with your Inspector, I made an Inspection of a large number of Dairies in the District: the majority were Defective, especially in the matter of Cow Pens and Drainage. In consequence a circular letter was sent by your Council to all Cow Keepers in the District, reminding them of their duties and responsibilities.

The ordinary Inspections have been made by your Inspector and myself during the year. I have visited the Houses of the Out-workers, 10 in number. In one instance only were there any Sanitary Defects, and these have been remedied.

Factories, Workshops, Bake-houses and Butchers' Premises have been regularly Inspected during the year.

DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.—Your Council continue to discourage Cesspits at every opportunity, and to substitute Earth Closets or galvanized buckets.

Drainage operations have been carried out in Wood Street, Milverton, at Hillcommon and Bradford.

No Scavenging is undertaken by your Council.

No Legal Proceedings have been found necessary during the year, and no Local Government Inquiries have been held in the District.

There has been a change amongst your Officers since my last Annual Report. Mr. Edward Richards, after 25 years of honourable service, has retired, the Local Government Board refusing to allow him any longer to hold the dual appointment of Sanitary and Highway Inspector. His place has been taken by Mr. Ernest Howard, who devotes three whole days a week to the duties of Sanitary Inspector. The scheme is, as far as I can see at present, answering well, and some good work is being accomplished.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

CHARLES RANDOLPH,

Medical Officer of Health.

